



Parshas Yisro 5762

February 1, '02
Volume I Issue 11

If a non-Jew switched a light on for me, may I benefit from it?

The *Halacha* is, as brought down in the *Shulchan Aruch*,¹ that a Jew may not derive benefit from a light switched on by a non-Jew for the sake of a Jew. This prohibition is expanded to include even people that it was not lit for,² and hence no Jew may benefit from it.

Accordingly, if one is sitting in a dark room, where reading a book was impossible, and a non-Jew generously switches on the light, one may not take out a book to read. If, however, reading was possible in a semi-dark room and a non-Jew switched on an extra light, one may benefit from the extra light as well.³ If the original light goes out, it is prohibited to use the light lit by the non-Jew.

What if he was prepaid before Shabbos to do so?

The *Rama*⁴ says that even if the non-Jew was hired on a daily basis to switch on lights when necessary, or paid for individual lighting, one is forbidden to use the light.

What if the non-Jew switched the light on for his own benefit?

When a non-Jew turns on a light for his own benefit, for example, we see him turn on a light and pull out a newspaper to read, a Jew may benefit from that light for whatever he wants.⁵

The same applies when a non-Jew turns on a light for an ill person.⁶ Since it is a permitted act, other Jews may benefit from the light as well. If, however, a non-Jew cooked food for an ill person, even if there was no problem of *bishul akum*,⁷ nevertheless a healthy Jew may not partake of the food, because *Chazal* were afraid that the Jew would ask the non-Jew to cook some more food for him. This differs from the light, because the one light caters for many, and one will not come to ask the non-Jew to light another one, unlike food, which is consumed by each individual.

What if he switched it on for both of us?

When the non-Jew turns on the light for both a Jew and for another non-Jew, the Jew **may not** benefit from the light.⁸ However, when the non-Jew who turned on the light is in the picture, i.e. he did it for himself, if we

¹ *Simon* 276:1

² When lit for a Jew.

³ *Simon* 276:4 and *M"B* 32.

⁴ *Simon* 276:1

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ This refers to an ill person who as a result of his illness may have a non-Jew do even a *melacha d'oraisso* for him.

⁷ Food cooked by a non-Jew may not be eaten by a Jew unless certain conditions are met.

⁸ *Simon* 276:2. *M"B* 16 says that the reason is either because it was **also** lit for a Jew, or because **maybe** he had the Jew in mind.

know that he had the Jew in mind as well, it is a dispute between the *Magen Avraham* and the *Chayei Adam* whether the Jew may benefit from the light.⁹ In such a case a *Rav* should be consulted.

If I instruct a non-Jew to wash the dishes and he turns on the lights, may I benefit from that light?

The *Taz*¹⁰ says that in such a case it is considered as if the non-Jew turned on the lights for his own sake, and not for mine, even though he is washing my dishes; I may duly benefit from the light. However, this *halacha* is tricky, because if I ask a non-Jew¹¹ to accompany me in order to get something from my dark storeroom, and he turns on the light, it is considered as if he turned it on for me, even though he is coming with me, and I may not benefit from this light.

Vort On The Parsha

In the Commandment of Shabbos, it says that Hashem **blessed** the Shabbos and He **sanctified** it. *Rashi* explains that it means that Hashem blessed the Shabbos by doubling the portion of *Man* on Friday, and sanctified it by not supplying *Man* on the Shabbos. Thereby hinting that whatever a person needs he will get without desecrating the Shabbos, and by, heaven forbid, desecrating the Shabbos, nothing will be gained.

That is maybe why the *Man* never received a proper name. The *Man* was called thus because the people did not know what it

⁹ *M"B Simon* 276:17 and the *Bi'ur Halacha*.

¹⁰ *Simon* 276:5

¹¹ *Simon* 276:3

was, and they said to each other "*Man Hu*", meaning what is it. But even after they knew what it was, it remained nameless. Maybe to teach us that a person thinks that he can name the source of his *parnassah* – sustenance, when in fact it is all a decree from heaven how much and from what, a person will receive his livelihood.

Food For Thought

Is one permitted to ask a non-Jew to turn on the heating?

Is there a difference between a hearth and central heating?

If a non-Jew turned on the heating when it was prohibited to do so, what is one supposed to do?

Is it permitted to turn off the lights to enable a sick person to sleep?

Answers coming next week.

Iggeres HaGra - (part 9)

As it is written (Vayikra 21:9), "She defiles her father" - [in such a case] the son of a righteous man is called "the son of a wicked man" (Sanhedrin 52a). Similarly in other matters, lashon hara and gossip.

Their eating and drinking should always be preceded and followed by the appropriate blessings. They must be careful to say the blessings, Birkas Hamazon and Krias Shema with proper kavanah (intent). Most importantly, they must not wander outside the home and must obey and respect you and my mother and all their elders. They also need to observe all that is written in the Mussar books.

In honor of the birth of CHAVA ESTER TURKELTAUB and
in memory of her great grandmother Devorah bas Moshe a"h who passed on a few hours after her birth.

One may receive and distribute these weekly shiurim by calling or writing: Office 99 Rechov Bayit Vegan, Yerushalayim,
Phone Numbers: U.S. and Canada 732-370-3344 Israel 972-8-974-4177

South Africa 2711-728-4275 England 44161-792-2492 Australia 61-296835626

• e-mail: shabbosweekly@shemayisrael.com, or www.shemayisrael.com,

weekly sponsorships are available as well.

If you would like to send a question to Rav Ostroff, you can write to him at shabbosweekly@shemayisrael.com.

Note: The purpose of this series is intended solely for the clarification of the topics discussed and not to render halachic decisions. It is intended to heighten everyone's awareness of important practical questions which do arise on this topic. One must consult with a proper halachic authority in order to receive p'sak.